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The Power of Spoken Audio

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Wundervoll! Text to Speech Helps Language
Student Learn German
With TextAloud, Language Learning is Accessible Anywhere

CLEMMONS, NC – Learning a new language can be a daunting process -- but the time-honored approach of listening to the language often makes for faster results, improved comprehension, and a better 'ear.' In his studies of the German language, for instance, retired aerospace test systems engineer Paul Harker took this approach a step further, incorporating Text to Speech into his studies using *TextAloud* software from **NextUp Technologies (http://www.NextUp.com)**.

"*TextAloud* quickly became a very important part of my learning process," comments Harker, a Michigan native who dedicated himself to learning German, and created an intensive study regimen hinging on *TextAloud*. Harker utilized *TextAloud* to incorporate listening to German into his daily routine, both at the desk and on the go, in a variety of truly creative ways. He began the process by installing both English and German Premium Voices in his use of the software, with the German Acapela® Premium Voice 'Klaus' set as his 'default' voice. "Then, when reading text on a web page or in an e-mail, whenever I needed to check on how to pronounce the words, I simply played them with *TextAloud*," he comments. "I could do this easily from within *Outlook, Firefox*, and *Internet Explorer* using the *TextAloud* toolbars, or from other applications using the clipboard monitoring feature."

Harker incorporated the German language into his recreational reading, downloading a variety of eBooks from such websites as Project Gutenberg, and then loading them into *TextAloud* for handy listening anywhere. "I installed an electronic dictionary, which meant I was able to select an unknown word or phrase for a translation if needed," he adds. He also used *TextAloud* to read German-language web pages, following along in the written text for greater comprehension.

To amplify his learning process, Harker created a way for *TextAloud* to actually speak a word in English, and then to repeat the word in German, just as a translator or language tape might do. He also created macros in his *Excel* workbook to reformat words and phrases into text and audio "flashcards." The text versions were then loaded into a flashcard program (such as *Twinkle* for the Palm), while the "audio flashcards" files he loaded into *TextAloud* to automatically convert to audio files which he could then listen to anywhere on his Treo™ cellular phone. At the press of a few buttons, he was then able to brush up on his German, both visually and aurally, no matter where he went.

"It was a slightly 'geeky' solution in some ways," he comments, "but the end result is that *TextAloud* now speaks an English word to me using an English voice, then repeats the word twice in German (using the 'Klaus' German voice). This process allows me enough time to repeat the word out loud, and then finishes by repeating a phrase also incorporating the target word."

"*TextAloud* is great for learning the proper pronunciations of foreign words no matter what the language," he comments. "In addition, since *TextAloud* works with all standard text files, all of the steps needed to create word repetitions and other exercises can be automated." The program's scripting tools also allow him to automate aspects like vocal choices, inserted pauses, and speed and volume, as well. "These are invaluable for quickly and efficiently creating a custom language lesson," he explains.

Most of all, Harker appreciates the program's versatility and ease, allowing for listening in whatever setting the user chooses. "I love the fact that *TextAloud* dutifully creates audio files for all my German-language words and phrases, which I can then sync with iTunes into my Treo and use whenever I have the time and inclination -- and wherever I go." He doesn't just use the software for German, either: "I've also created audio books in English for long car trips with the family."

Harker is now at ease with the German language, and already speaks it at the intermediate level. "The beauty of *TextAloud* is that it is easy to use for the beginner, and powerful for the advanced user," he comments. "It has simplified every step of my language-learning life. I am no longer tied to the computer, nor do I need to sit down with a book. I can learn on a walk, on a bus, plane, train ... anywhere!" Thanks to *TextAloud*, Harker was truly able to "hören sie zu und lernen" (listen and learn).

About *TextAloud*

Highly useful for students, scientists, writers, business people, students and people from all walks of life -- *TextAloud* has been featured in *The New York Times, PC Magazine, Writer's Digest*, on CNN, and more. Hailed by critics and users alike, *TextAloud* is priced from $29.95, and is compatible with systems using Windows® 98, NT, 2000, XP and Vista. *TextAloud* also works seamlessly with iTunes, for easy synching with iPod®, iPhone™, or other iTunes-compatible portable audio players. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via **http://www.NextUp.com**.

NextUp.com also offers *TextAloud* with optional premium voices from **AT&T Natural Voices™, Nuance®, Acapela®** and **Cepstral®** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Available languages include U.S. English, U.K. English, Indian Accent English, Scottish Accent English, Arabic, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Belgian Dutch, Faroese, Finnish, French, Canadian French, German, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Castilian (European) Spanish, Latin American Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish.

About NextUp.com

NextUp.com, a division of NextUp Technologies, LLC, provides award-winning Text to Speech software for consumers, professionals, businesses, educators, and those with visual or vocal impairment, or learning disabilities.

In addition to *TextAloud*, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software designed to save time and deliver vital information. NextUp *Talker* is an easy and affordable program that allows people who have lost their voices to use the latest in high-quality computer voices to communicate with others.

Evaluation copies of *TextAloud* are available upon request. For more information on NextUp.com or *TextAloud*, or for other case studies involving users ranging from writers, editors, and teachers, to students, entrepreneurs, firefighters, doctors, lawyers, truck drivers, musicians, and more, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or via *Admitchell@Nextup.com*.

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